

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 TEHRAN 08101 261102Z
ACTION SS-25

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O R 260959Z ZFF4

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 13

INFO AMEMBASSY ANAKARA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

S E C R E T TEHRAN 08101

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4

TAGES: IR, PFOR

SUBJECT: MEETING WITH SHARIF-EMAMI WHO EXPECTS TO BE NEXT
PRIME MINISTER

SUMMARY: DCM MET WITH SENATE PRESIDENT SHARIF-EMAMI, AT
LATTER'S REQUEST, AUG. 26. EMAMI SAID HE WOULD BE NAMED NEW
PRIMIN IN NEAR FUTURE, WANTED CLOSE RELATIONS WITH US AND FRANK
EXCHANGE ON ANY DIFFERENCES -- EITHER INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL
POLICIES, FELT HE WOULD HAVE TO CONCENTRATE ON SOVIET MEDDLING
IN IRANIAN AFFAIRS AND DID NOT "WANT TO BE DIVERTED BY ACTIONS
OF IRAN'S FRIENDS." END SUMMARY.

1. SENATOR MESBAHZADEH, PUBLISHER OF KAYHAN PUBLICATIONS,
CALLED DCM EVENING AUG. 25 TO REQUEST DCM (SENATOR WAS
UNAWARE AMBASSADOR HAD RETURNED TO POST) TO CALL ON SENATE
PRESIDENT SHARIF-EMAMI "WHO WILL BE NEW PRIME MINISTER".
MEETING TOOK PLACE AT 0800 AUG. 26 AT PAHLAVI FOUNDATION.

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2. SHARIF-EMAMI WASTED NO WORDS AND IMMEDIATELY SAID
THAT HE HAD BEEN ASKED TO TAKE OVER AS PRIMIN AND WOULD
SEE THE SHAH LATER IN DAY. "I HAVE GIVEN CERTAIN CONDITIONS
TO THE SHAH BUT I BELIEVE HE WILL ACCEPT THEM." THE COUNTRY,
HE SAID, WAS GOING THROUGH A VERY DIFFICULT PERIOD--RIOTS,

ARSON, ETC. AT THE BEGINNING, THE DEMONSTRATIONS MAY HAVE BEEN SPONTANEOUS BUT NOW HE COULD NOT HELP BUT BELIEVE THAT AN OUTSIDE FORCE OR FORCES WERE INVOLVED. THE SOVIETS CLEARLY WOULD BE THE ONLY ONES TO GAIN FROM DISORDER. HE COULD HANDLE THIS THREAT AS LONG AS HE WAS NOT "DIVERTED BY ACTIONS OF IRAN'S FRIENDS." THEREFORE, HE WANTED TO ESTABLISH CLOSE LINKS WITH THE US--EITHER DIRECTLY WITH HIM OR THROUGH TRUSTED INTERMEDIARIES--SO THAT ANY DIFFERENCES COULD BE FULLY DISCUSSED AND RESOLVED--THIS COVERED EXTERNAL AS WELL AS INTERNAL POLICIES. WHEN THE DCM MENTIONED THAT THE AMBASSADOR HAD RETURNED, SHARIF-EMAMI ASKED THAT THE CONVERSATION BE FULLY REPORTED TO THE AMBASSADOR WITH WHOM HE WANTED A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP.

3. THE "PREVIOUS" GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, HAD ACTED UNWISELY WITH RESPECT TO BOTH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL MATTERS. HE HAD ALREADY ESTABLISHED CONTACTS WITH ALL THE MAJOR RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND EXPECTED THEIR SUPPORT. HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD TRULY WORK WITHIN THE BOUNDS OF THE CONSTITUTION, THE SHAH WILL NOT BE INVOLVED IN DAY-TO-DAY AFFAIRS ("MY GOVERNMENT WILL NEVER SAY THE SHAH ORDERED THIS OR THAT"), HE AND THE MINISTERS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE AND THE PEOPLE WILL FIND THEM RESPONSIVE TO THEIR NEEDS, AND THE SHAH'S FAMILY WILL NOT BE PERMITTED IN ANY WAY TO INTERFERE IN GOVERNMENT. "I AM SIXTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD, FORTY OF WHICH HAVE BEEN IN SERVICE, AND I KNOW MY PEOPLE AND WHAT THEY WANT. I AM NOT AFRIAD TO TELL THE SHAH THINGS HE MAY NOT WISH TO HEAR."

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4. IN RESPONSE TO SHARIF-EMAMI'S QUERY OF WHAT WAS THE US ASSESSMENT OF CURRENT EVENTS IN IRAN, THE DCM NOTED THAT HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS BUT COULD WITH COMPLETE CONFIDENCE STATE THAT THE STABILITY OF IRAN WAS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THE U.S., THAT OUR FOREIGN/SECURITY INTERESTS WERE NEARLY IDENTICAL IN MOST INSTANCES AND THAT NO US INTEREST WHATSOEVER WAS SERVED BY THE CURRENT DISORDERS. THE DCM COMMENTED THAT IT SEEMED ESSENTIAL TO ESTABLISH A CLOSE DIALOGUE WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS, THE MAJORITY OF WHOM WERE RESPONSIBLE AND SUPPORTED THE MONARCHY AND CONSTITUTION. THE EXTREMISTS HAD TO BE ISOLATED AND THE PROVOCATEURS IDENTIFIED. HIS MAJESTY'S POLICY OF LIBERALIZATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS HAD OUR FULL SUPPORT, HE SAID, AND, IF HIS MAJESTY SELECTED SHARIF-EMAMI AS PRIME MINISTER, WE WISHED HIM EVERY SUCCESS.

5. SHARIF-EMAMI SAID HE APPRECIATED THESE VIEWS BUT AGAIN REVERTED TO THE THEME THAT HE COULD UNDERSTAND WHY THE SOVIETS WOULD ATTEMPT TO DESTABILIZE IRAN BUT HE COULD NOT COMPREHEND WHY OTHERS WOULD DO SO. "YOU HAD DIFFERENCES

WITH THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT ON OIL PRICES AND THERE ARE HUMAN RIGHTS, THE DOLLAR AND LIBERALIZATION." ALL THESE MATTERS SHOULD BE DISCUSSED. WHEN DCM INTERJECTED A COMMENT ABOUT OUR GOOD RELATIONS WITH PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS, SHARIF-EMAMI HELD UP HIS HAND AND SAID "BUT PERHAPS YOU DO NOT KNOW EVERYTHING THAT SOME AGENCIES OF YOUR GOVERNMENT DO." HE STRESSED THAT HE WANTED EVERYTHING OUT IN THE OPEN BETWEEN US; IF WE HAD COMPLAINTS AND PROBLEMS HE WANTED TO HEAR THEM DIRECTLY FROM US AND WOULD PASS HIS COMPLAINTS TO US AS WELL. THE DCM REPLIED, IN CONCLUDING THE CONVERSATION, THAT IT WAS IN OUR MUTUAL INTERESTS TO HAVE A COMPLETELY CANDID RELATIONSHIP.

6. COMMENT: THIS WAS A STRANGE CONVERSATION FOR SHARIF-EMAMI CLEARLY BELIEVES THAT WE HAVE PLAYED A ROLE IN THE SECRET

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CURRENT DISORDERS. AS AN OLD TIMER IN IRANIAN POLITICS, HE REMEMBERS WELL THE DAYS WHEN WE WERE MORE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN MANY INTERNAL AFFAIRS BECAUSE OF OUR LARGE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY AID PROGRAMS. LIKE SO MANY IRANIANS, HE SEES THE FOREIGN HAND WHEN THINGS GO BADLY. THERE WAS ALSO MORE THAN A HINT IN HIS COMMENTS OF THAT OTHER PERVERSIVE IRANIAN FEAR--THAT FOR SOME ARCAINE REASON THE US AND SOVIETS ARE COLLUDING TO DIVIDE IRAN INTO SPHERES OF INFLUENCE. IN HIS VIEW HE WAS PLACING HIS CARDS ON THE TABLE--ASKING FOR SUPPORT AND WARNING US AT THE SAME TIME.

7. SHARIF-EMAMI COMES AS CLOSE AS ANYONE HERE OF BEING THE ELDER STATESMAN, THE GENERALLY RESPECTED FIGURE WHO PROBABLY CAN ESTABLISH A DEGREE OF TRUST WITH THE RELIGIOUS LEADERS. THE SHAH NEEDS THIS KIND OF PERSON AT THIS TIME. IF SHARIF-EMAMI IS INDEED DESIGNATED, AMBASSADOR WILL MEET WITH HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IN ATTEMPT DISPEL ANY ILLUSIONS HE MAY HAVE ABOUT MALIGN US INVOLVEMENT IN IRAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

8. AMBASSADOR WILL HAVE AUDIENCE WITH SHAH MONDAY, AUG. 28 AND WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO DISABUSE SHAH OF HIS LINGERING CONCERNS ABOUT US-SOVIET DESIGNS AND US MEDDLING IN IRAN'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS.
SULLIVAN

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*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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